

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Withdrawn) A gaming machine comprising:

a master gaming controller designed or configured to control a game played on the gaming machine wherein each game played on the gaming machine includes receiving a wager for the game, determining the game outcome and the presenting the game outcome and to communicate with one or more game service servers wherein each game service server provides at least one game service;

a communication multiplexer device connected to the master gaming controller wherein the communication multiplexer device is transparent to the master gaming controller allowing the master gaming controller to communicate with a particular game service server without knowing whether the communication multiplexer device is in a communication path between the master gaming controller and the particular game service server, the communication multiplexer device comprising

(i) a plurality of communication ports wherein each communication port is capable of transmitting and receiving messages with the master gaming controller using a native communication protocol,

(ii) an output communication port for transmitting and for receiving messages with the one or more game service servers using a second communication protocol, and

(iii) processor logic that multiplexes and demultiplexes messages between the plurality of communication ports and the output communication port and that converts between the native communication protocol and the second communication protocol; and

a network interface connected to the output communication port that receives and transmits messages using the second communication protocol.

2. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the game service is selected from group consisting of progressive game services, bonus game services, player tracking services, cashless ticketing services, game downloading services, prize services, entertainment content services, concierge services, lottery services and money transfer services.

3. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the network interface is a wireless radio connection.

4. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the network interface is a wired Ethernet connection.

5. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 3, further comprising:
an antenna for transmitting and receiving communications over the wireless radio connection.

6. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the native communication protocol is selected from the group consisting of a progressive game service protocol, a bonus game service protocol, a player tracking service protocol, a cashless ticketing service protocol, a game downloading service protocol, a prize service protocol, an entertainment content service protocol, a concierge service protocol, a lottery service protocol and a money transfer service protocol.

7. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the plurality of communication ports comprises a first communication port using a first native communication protocol a second communication port using a second native communication protocol.

8. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the plurality of communication ports comprises a first communication port that receives and sends messages from a first game service server and a second communication port that receives and send messages from a second game service server.

9. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein communication between the gaming machine and the one or more game servers is encrypted.

10. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the processor logic is capable of configuring each of the plurality of communication ports to emulate a native communication protocol.

11. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 10, wherein the communication multiplexer communication device is capable of communicating with a boot server to determine the native communication protocol to be used on each of the plurality of communication ports.

12. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the one or more game service servers are selected from the group consisting of a prize server, a game server, an entertainment content server, a cashless ticketing server, progressive game server, a bonus game server, a concierge service server, a lottery server and a money transfer server.

13. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the game played on the gaming machine is at least one of a video slot game, a mechanical slot game, a lottery game, a video poker game, a video black jack game, and a video pachinko game.

14. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the second communication protocol is a TCP/IP communication protocol.

15. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the gaming machine employs regulated gaming software that provides messages in the native communication protocol and wherein the regulated gaming software is not modified to accept messages transmitted in the second communication protocol.

16. (Withdrawn) The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein a physical interface of the one or more communication ports is selected from the group consisting of RS-422/485, Fiber Optic, RS-232, DCS Current Loop, Link Progressive Current Loop, IEEE (Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers) 1394-compatible, Ethernet and USB (Universal Serial BUS)-compatible.

17. (Currently Amended) A multiplexer communication device for multiplexing communications between a master gaming controller on a gaming machine and one or more game service servers, the multiplexer communication device comprising:

a plurality of communication ports connected to a multi-port communication board wherein each communication port transmits and receives messages between the gaming machine and the multiplexer communication device in a native communication protocol in an application specific protocol wherein the application specific protocol is programmed in regulated gaming software that is executed by the master gaming controller for allowing the master gaming controller to receive and to send messages in the application specific protocol and wherein each communication port is configured to accept a physical communication connection compatible with the application specific protocol and wherein each communication port is configurable to utilize a physical communication protocol that allows messages in the application specific protocol to be parsed by the communication multiplexer device;

a multi-port communication board allowing each communication port to be configured to accept multiple native communication protocols;

an output communication port that transmits messages addressed to one or more game service servers and receives messages from one or more game service servers addressed to one of the plurality of communication ports using a second communication protocol; and

a logic device that does not communicate with the master gaming controller on the gaming machine, said logic device adapted for:

i) determining a destination device for each message received at one of the plurality of communication ports wherein each message is formatted using a particular application specific protocol, formatting each message in the particular application specific protocol into the second communication protocol and transmitting a message formatted in the second communication protocol via the output communication port to the destination device wherein the message formatted in the second communication protocol includes information originally formatted in the particular application specific protocol;

ii) determining a destination port from among the plurality of communication ports for each message received at the output communication port wherein each message received at the output communication port is formatted using the second communication protocol, formatting the message received in the second communication protocol into the particular application specific communication protocol that is compatible with the destination port and transmitting the message in the particular application specific protocol via the destination port; and

a memory device for storing a) information regarding the application specific protocol and the physical communication protocol used at each of the plurality of communication ports, b) the second communication protocol and c) a mapping between each of the plurality of communication ports and one or more of the destination devices, said mapping allowing the logic device to determine the destination device or the destination port for each message received by the communications multiplexer device

processor logic that is capable of multiplexing and demultiplexing messages between the plurality of communication ports and the output communication port and that converts between the native communication protocol and the second communication protocol wherein the communication multiplexer device is transparent to the master gaming controller in its communications with the one or more game service servers allowing the master gaming controller to communicate with a particular game service server without knowing whether the communication multiplexer device is in a communication path between the master gaming controller and the particular game service server.

18. (Currently Amended) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, wherein the gaming machine employs regulated gaming software that provides messages in the native communication protocol to the one or more communication ports and wherein the regulated gaming software on the gaming machine that is used when the communication multiplexer device is in a communication path between the gaming machine and the one or more game service servers is the same as when the communication multiplexer device is not in a

communication path between the gaming machine and the one or more game service servers. is not modified to accept messages transmitted in the second communication protocol.

19. (Currently Amended) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, further comprising:

an EEPROM that provides configuration information to the processor board, said configuration information including one or more of the mapping, the physical communication protocol used at each of the communication ports or the application specific protocol used at each of the communication ports.

20. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, further comprising:

a firewall connected to the output communication port.

21. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, further comprising:

a power supply.

22. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, further comprising:

a network interface board.

23. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 22, wherein the network interface board provides a wireless radio network interface.

24. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 22, wherein the network interface board provides a Ethernet network interface.

25. (Original) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, wherein the second communication protocol is a TCP/IP communication protocol.

26. (Currently Amended) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, wherein the ~~native communication protocol~~ the application specific protocol is selected from the group consisting of a progressive game service protocol, a bonus game service protocol, a player tracking service protocol, a cashless ticketing service protocol, a game downloading service protocol, a prize service protocol, an entertainment content service protocol, a concierge service protocol, a lottery service protocol and a money transfer service protocol.

27. (Currently Amended) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, wherein ~~a physical interface of the one or more communication ports~~ the physical communication connection is selected from the group consisting of RS-422/485, Fiber Optic, RS-232, DCS Current Loop, Link Progressive Current Loop, IEEE (Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers) 1394-compatible, Ethernet and USB (Universal Serial BUS)-compatible.

28. (Original) The communication mutliplexer device of claim 17, further comprising:
an antenna connected to the output communication port.

29. (Previously Amended) The communication mutliplexer device of claim 17, wherein the plurality of communication ports comprise 8 communication ports.

30. (Previously Amended) The communication mutliplexer device of claim 17, wherein the plurality of communication ports comprise 16 communication ports.

31. (Withdrawn) A method of providing communications between master gaming controller on a gaming machine and one or more game service servers in a communication multiplexer device connected to the gaming machine and the one or more game service servers, the method comprising:

establishing communications with a boot server located outside of the communication multiplexer device;

initializing one or more of a plurality of communication ports on the communications multiplexer device wherein each of the initialized communication ports is connected to a game service network interface on the gaming machine;

mapping each of the initialized communication ports to a port game service server;

configuring each of the one or communication ports to accept a native communication protocol used by the master gaming controller on the gaming machine for communications over the game service network interface with the port game service server wherein the communication multiplexer device is transparent to the master gaming controller allowing the master gaming controller to communicate with a particular game service server without knowing whether the communication multiplexer device is in a communication path between the master gaming controller and the particular game service server;

establishing a communication connection between each communication port and the port game service server;

receiving a message from the master gaming controller via a first initialized communication port in the native communication protocol used on the first initialized communication port and

transmitting the message using a second communication protocol different from the native communication protocol to the port game service server mapped to the first initialized communication port.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the gaming machine employs regulated gaming software that provides messages in the native communication protocol to the one or more communication ports and wherein the regulated gaming software is not modified to accept messages transmitted in the second communication protocol.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the communication multiplexer device is assigned an IP address by the boot server.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31, further comprising:
converting messages from the gaming machine in the native communication protocol received at one of the initialized communication ports to the second communication protocol; and
transmitting the messages in the second communication protocol to the port game service server.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31, further comprising:
converting messages from the port game server addressed to one of the initialized communication ports in the second communication protocol to the native communication protocol of the communication port; and
transmitting the messages in the native communication protocol via the initialized communication port to the master gaming controller on the gaming machine.

36. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31, further comprising:
receiving a message from the port game service server wherein the message contains a communication port address; and
routing the message from the game service server to the communication port indicated by the communication port address.

37. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31, further comprising:
receiving a message from the gaming machine at one of the initialized communication ports;

determining an address of the game service server corresponding to the one communication port; and
routing the message from the gaming machine to the address of the game service server.

38. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the native communication protocol is selected from the group consisting of RS-422/485, Fiber Optic, RS-232, DCS Current Loop, Link Progressive Current Loop, IEEE (Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers) 1394-compatible, Ethernet and USB (Universal Serial BUS)-compatible.

39. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the second communication protocol is a TCP/IP communication protocol.

40. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31, wherein the one or more game service servers are selected from the group consisting of a prize server, a game server, an entertainment content server, a cashless ticketing server, progressive game server, a bonus game server, a concierge service server, a lottery server and a money transfer server.

41. (New) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, wherein the logic device is adapted for receiving information formatted in a first application specific protocol and translating information to a second application specific protocol.

42. (New) The communication multiplexer device of claim 41, wherein the first application specific protocol is a first player tracking protocol and the second application specific protocol is a second player tracking protocol.

43. (New) The communication multiplexer device of claim 17, wherein information stored in the memory device is loaded into the memory device from a boot server.